

# Micro-mobility: the next big thing?



Recent developments in mobility, such as the arrival on our streets of shared bikes and mopeds, plus electric scooters, have raised questions about their place in today's transport system, about safety and regulation, among other issues. The conference in Ljubljana on 14 October 2019 brought together representatives from city authorities, national and European administrators, academics, micro-mobility companies and users to assess the challenges and opportunities presented by micro-mobility for people in urban settings.



EU Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc in Ljubljana

*"There is one micro-mobility topic that is a priority to all – service providers, cities and administrators – and that is safety. The EU is ready to engage in all discussions and ready to share expertise on road safety, intelligent and sustainable solutions and infrastructure planning." – Violeta Bulc*

A need for micro-mobility planning and a sense of urgency were among the views expressed by participants. For details, see below.

## **PARTICIPANTS' DECLARATION**

### **1. Integration into today's city mobility landscape**

Urban mobility must be redefined, including the role of public transport: shared micro-mobility solutions should be integrated into public transport and be complementary to it; they should not replace it. For this integration to happen, the right infrastructure is needed, possibly including designated zones for specific modes, or giving priority to specific modes within certain zones.

Integration also means dealing with public space issues, and adjusting urban areas accordingly. Each city should manage its own space. Integration also applies to journey planning and ticketing (see 'Digitalisation' below).

### **2. Safety**

Discussions covered the safety of mobility devices as well as their integration within traffic. In the first category, setting a minimum technical standard for a vehicle or device would help keep users safe. Keeping different modes separate whenever possible could also help prevent accidents.

### **3. Accessibility**

Urban areas and in particular pavements, must remain accessible for all, including the elderly and disabled.

Participants considered adapting vehicles for those with restricted mobility (adding a third wheel, a seat, a belt etc.). For those without a smartphone, information points should be established. Solutions should remain affordable and available, including for those living in remote or peripheral areas

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## 4. Digital

Discussions addressed how travellers could benefit from a single one-stop-shop/app or that could also indicate whether public transport or a shared micro-mobility option would be most appropriate for a given journey. Digitalisation will enable such a one-stop app for ticketing, pricing and information, creating a common platform for data-sharing. With such a platform in place, individuals would be more likely to embrace Mobility as a Service (MaaS). More discussions are needed on the rights and obligations of digital (sharing) mobility platforms. Digital infrastructure such as real-time monitoring platforms can help cities to manage fleets. Operators are keen to offer their own versions for each service.

## 5. Coordination

Cooperation is needed at all levels to make the most of micro-mobility: international/national/local, public/private/users/providers. This will help address the complications linked to the number of decision-making levels involved in planning (region, city council, public transport authorities, etc...).

Looking at market opportunities, participants were aware that investors need predictability. Co-financing was suggested, possibly through public-private partnerships.

But business models should be compatible with a city's policy vision, as well as public transport – they should not seek to replace it.

## 6. Regulation

Today there is a patchwork of regulations in place across the globe, from strong regulation (San Francisco, Paris) to no regulation at all, regulation forbidding the use of new devices in public space (UK) and obligatory type-approval with a plate and insurance (Germany).

As many countries consider the regulatory options, participants called for overregulation to be avoided. However, a common regulatory framework could address safety aspects such as speed limitations, minimum age requirements, guidance for parking, dedicated lanes, enforcement, safety of the vehicle, technical requirements, operating licences, creating single account, platforms' rights and obligations, and potential conflicts between use of open data and privacy.

## 7. Rural and remote areas

Participants recognised that micro-mobility options should not be limited to urban areas, but their potential should be fully utilised also in villages and rural areas, including to increase their connectivity through last mile links to public or on-demand transport. Dialogue with villages and pilot projects are necessary.